Part IV

Design Guidelines for New Residential Buildings - Single Family in Established Neighborhoods

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Neighborhood Compatibility and Character

This section of the design guidelines applies to new residential buildings and accessory buildings constructed within historic neighborhoods.

The City of South Pasadena General Plan outlines goals for 'Community Design and Appearance.' Addressing 'Quality in New Development',
Goal 8 is "To harmonize physical change to preserve South Pasadena's historic character, scale, and 'small town' atmosphere."

The policies outlined in the General Plan regarding new infill development include: "8.1 Require contextual, compatible and responsible design. Encourage new development to respect South Pasadena's heritage by requiring that it 'respond to context' – the distinctiveness of the locality and region as well as that scale and special characteristics of the fabric of the site's immediate surroundings; require that it be compatible with the traditions and character of the City, and minimize adverse impacts on the privacy and access to light and air of its neighbors."

The historic neighborhoods in South Pasadena each have established streetscape patterns defining their character. New structures should respect these established patterns and be consistent with the typical characteristics that can be seen from the street. These characteristics include setbacks, mass and height, roof forms, porches, facade elements and other architectural features. Nonetheless, new residences can have a distinctly modern aesthetic. However, these more modern elements within older neighborhoods should follow the neighborhood setbacks, scale, and overall massing.

- New infill construction should be compatible with the character of the neighborhood and the traditional architectural styles found there, and could incorporate the features of prevalent styles. New design in the traditional styles should be comprehensive in massing, forms, details and materials, with quality design work and craftsmanship.

Typical streetscape in South Pasadena with sidewalks, small front yards and consistent setbacks.

Mature landscaping provides community context even on streets that have newer residences.

Neighborhood Compatibility and Character

New residential design can draw from the established architectural vocabulary in South Pasadena.

Varying rooflines along the street provide visual interest.

- New construction within a historic neighborhoods does not require the direct duplication of the character-defining forms, features, materials, and details found on the many historic styles found in South Pasadena, but should be compatible in the level of articulation and detailing.

- New buildings should be compatible, but discernible from, the historic buildings in the neighborhood.

- Contemporary design generated with an understanding for the character of a historic neighborhood can enrich the architectural variety and contribute to the continuity of quality within the neighborhood. This can be achieved by careful consideration to height, form, massing, proportion, size, scale, and roof form and with careful attention to quality workmanship, compatible to that found in the surrounding neighborhoods. New residences can embrace modern detailing and materials, but should take into consideration the overall streetscape into which the new building will be inserted.

- New construction that draws from the vocabulary of materials and details from buildings in the surrounding neighborhood will provide a base of similar features that will provide continuity to the streetscape.

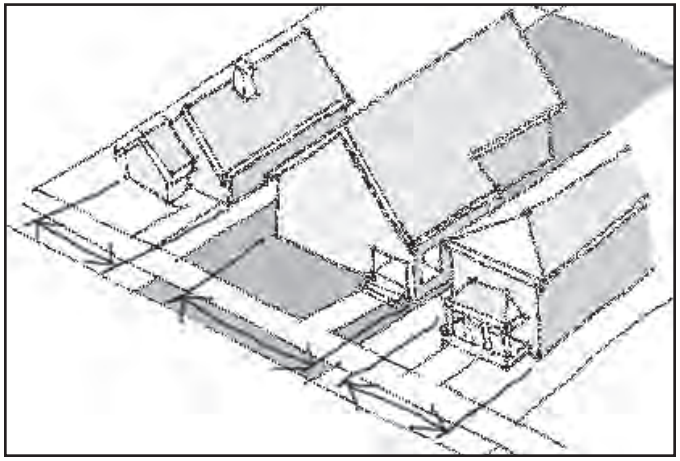
- New secondary structures should be located on the site at the rear of the property. Where possible, new structures should be adjacent to other secondary structures on neighboring sites, and be similar in size, massing and form.

A new building or accessory building should be compatible with its site. All new construction should relate to the natural attributes of the site including the existing slope and should be placed to respect existing mature trees and vegetation. The size, mass and height of a structure should be in proportion to the size of the property and should be similar to those nearby.

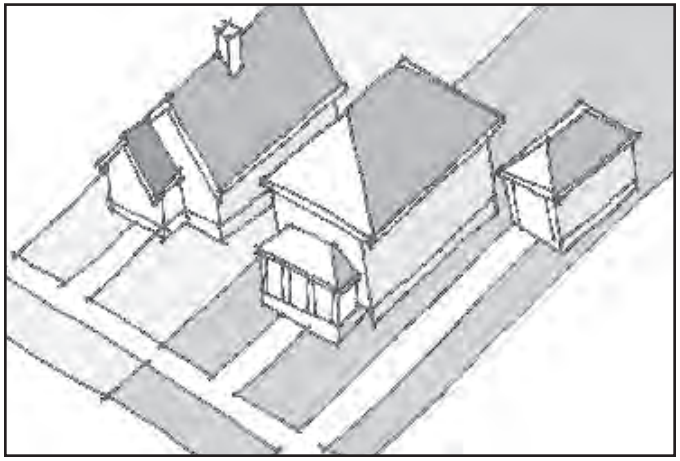
Typical Parcels and Building Placement

- New construction should be placed so that it is compatible with surrounding buildings in the neighborhood in terms of setback, orientation, spacing, and distance from adjacent buildings.

- The design of a new home should include open space around the structure compatible with the neighborhood, with front and side yard setbacks that respect the established pattern, but may be less than allowed by the Zoning Code.

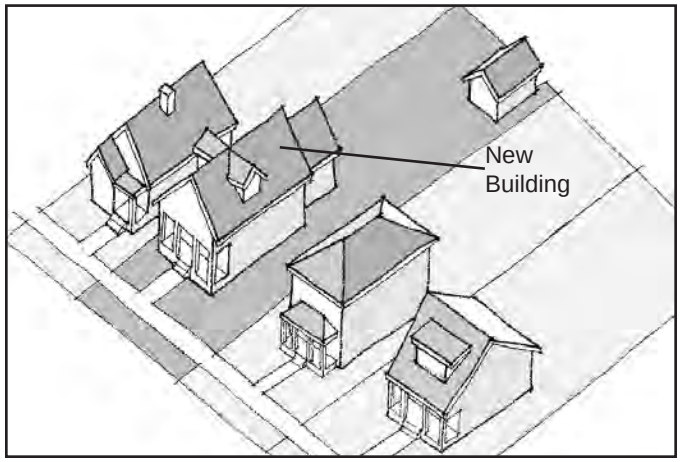


The primary facade of a residence should not exceed the width found typically on the block. This middle house illustrated here is too wide.

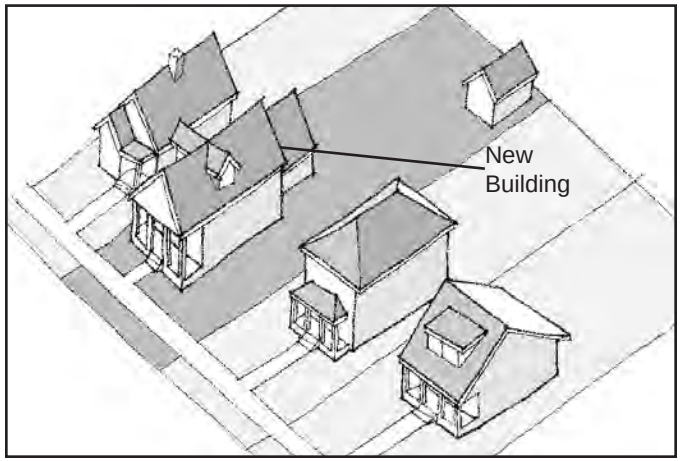


New residences with front entry ways and driveways to garages at the side yard are encouraged.

SITE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT



The new house is aligned with others along the block.



The new house is set too far forward on its lot, this arrangement is not encouraged.

Site Planning and Development

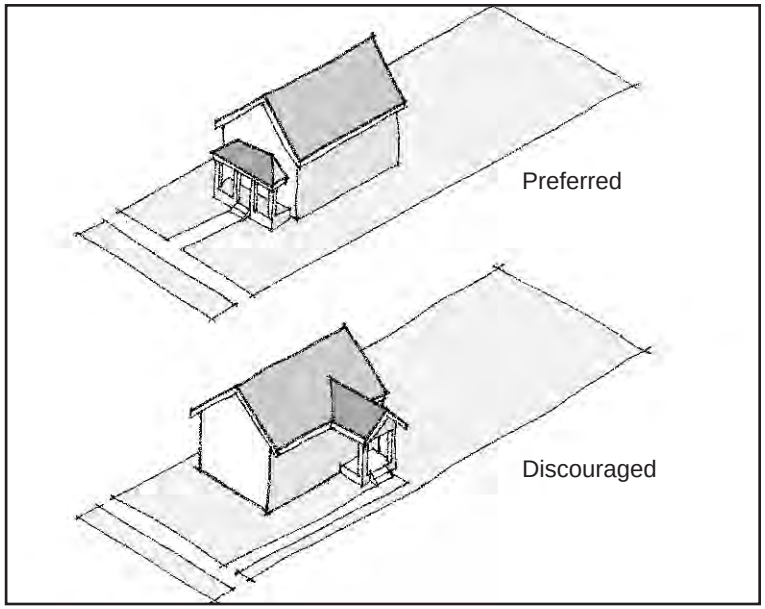
- Orient the front of the building to the street with the front entry toward the street wherever possible.
- Taller sections of a new building should be located so that they do not obstruct sunlight to adjacent gardens or rooms.
- Avoid encroaching on the privacy of an adjacent neighbor's windows. Windows and doors should be placed where they will promote and allow privacy between neighboring properties.
- Second floor balconies and decks should be designed to minimize the loss of privacy for neighboring properties.

Physical Design Components

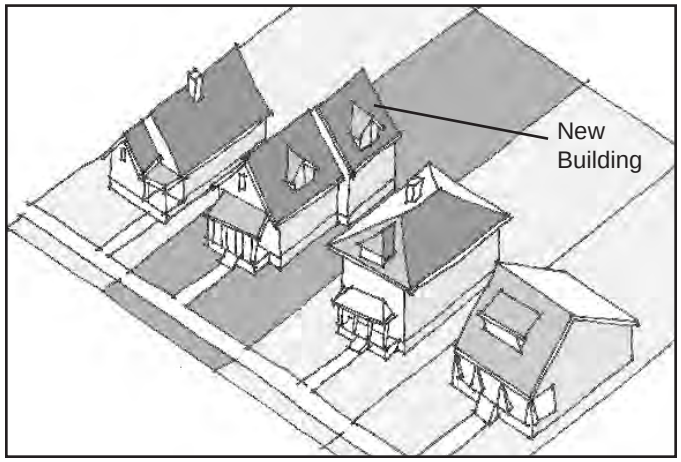
Set Back / Placement / Orientation

Lot size varies dramatically throughout South Pasadena, but houses are typically placed at the center of lots, with consistent set backs from the street, ample rear yards and equal side yard set backs. The front entries to buildings are predominantly center set with a walkway leading from the sidewalk. Driveways are usually located at the side yards with separate garages set behind the residences in the rear yards. Garage doors are not predominant features along the street front except in hillside locations.

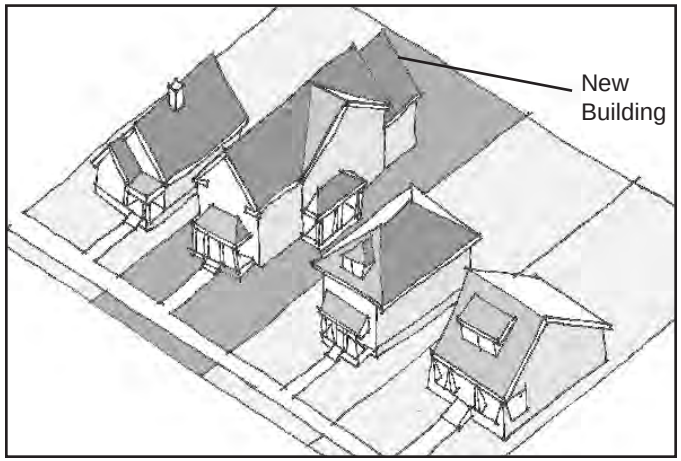
- New construction should respect the pattern of building placement and orientation on the block and surrounding neighborhood.
- Building fronts should align with traditional houses along the block.
- Where setbacks vary, a new building should fit within the range of setbacks found on the block.
- Orient the building to the street with the front entry facing toward the street.
- Clearly define the primary entrance by using a raised front porch or stoop. Orient the front porch to the street.
- Obstruction of the privacy of an adjacent neighbor should be avoided.
- Taller sections of a new building should be located so that they do not obstruct sunlight to adjacent gardens or rooms.
- Windows and doors should be placed where they will promote and allow privacy between neighboring properties.
- Second floor balconies and decks should be designed to minimize the loss of privacy for neighboring properties.



Locate the entry based on careful study of existing streetscape conditions. In areas where there is a predominant front entry, do not use side entries.



A new building should be within the range of heights and compatible in massing to those found in the neighborhood.



This example is too massive and has roof forms that are incompatible with the neighborhood.

Scale and Massing

The mass and scale of a new residence should be similar to that of single family structures in the surrounding neighborhood. The traditional scale of single family homes in South Pasadena is smaller and more intimate because of typical historic elements such as covered porch entries, articulated facades and detailed window, door and roof elements. New structures should have massing that is in scale with the surrounding neighborhoods and the natural features of the site.

- The width and height of the building at the front elevation should be similar to neighboring structures. Building forms similar to those found on historic buildings should be used in new construction. Simple rectangular forms are typically appropriate, with articulated facades and a symmetrical or balanced and composed juxtaposition of smaller elements.

- Building volume or mass should be kept to a minimum. Low-pitched roofs, single story porches at the front facade, and simple entries all minimize the appearance of building mass.

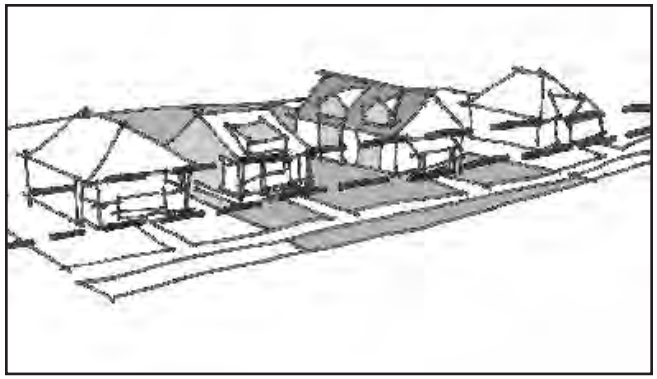
- A single wall plane should not exceed the maximum facade width of traditional buildings in the neighborhood. Two-story entry features are discouraged.

- Second floor balconies, small decks and landscape elements reduce the impact of two-story structures. Scale can be reduced by articulated and stepped facades, with the rear portion of a building taller that the front.

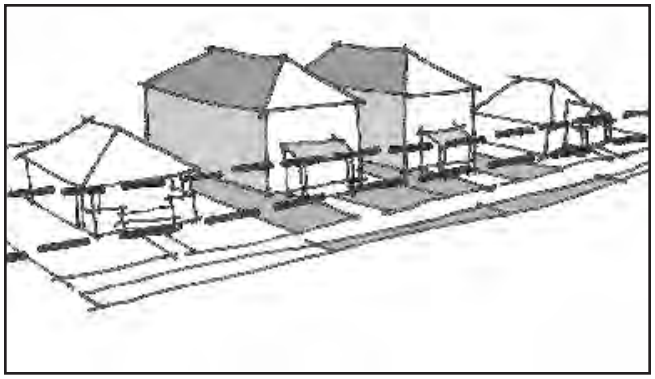
- The perceived mass of a building can also be reduced by a second floor that steps back on all sides of the building, or that is partially within the roof form.

Height and Roof Form

- Roof forms should be consistent with those in the surrounding neighborhoods, and compatible with the architectural style of the building.
- The overall height of a new structure should not be much greater than the surrounding buildings.
- First and second floor plate heights should be consistent with those on other homes in the neighborhood. Sloping roof forms are preferred.
- Primary roof forms should be hip or gable, with the steepness of the slopes dependent on the architectural style.
- The height of a building should also be consistent with and follow the natural contours of the site.

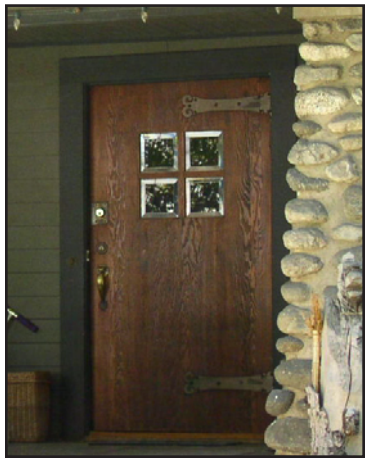
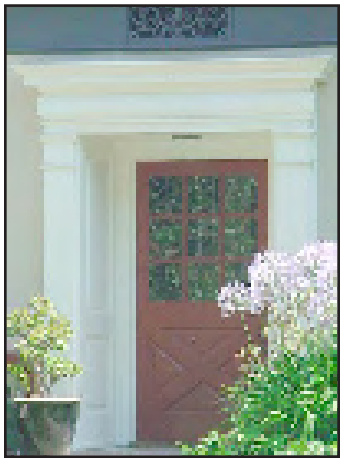


The new structures shown here are appropriately scaled and have plate heights consistent with the neighborhood.



The two new structures here have inappropriate massing and height.



Fenestration - Windows and Doors

Particular attention should be given to the spacing, placement, scale, orientation, proportion and size of window and door openings in new construction.

- The windows and doors should be compatible in type, size, material, subdivision, pattern and detail with the surrounding historic buildings in the neighborhood.
- Skylights should not be placed at the primary facades of new residences. Skylights should be designed as an integral part of the roof, flat in profile so as not to disrupt the roof form. Frames should be non-reflective and glazing should be clear.
- Double doors, sliding glass doors, and large expanses of undivided glazing at windows should be avoided.
- Front entry doors are typically single, not paired, solid wood doors, with some glazing.

Exterior Cladding and Roofing Materials

Exterior building materials on a new residence should complement that of the surrounding neighborhood. Use of materials should be compatible in the number of materials used, the quality of the materials, and the use of architectural detail and ornamentation.

- Compatibility: Exterior materials used in new construction should be common to the neighborhood and compatible with the architectural style of the house. Building materials used on new structures should contribute to the visual continuity of the neighborhood.

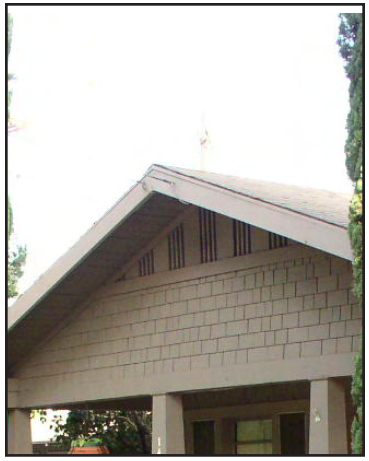
The City's Planning and Building Department maintains a list of exterior wall finishes that are generally acceptable for projects in South Pasadena. Materials are categorized into two groups: "encouraged" and "generally unacceptable". The term "generally" is used to imply that exceptions may be made in certain unique situations. An "encouraged " material may not be acceptable if used in the wrong context. At the same time, a "generally unacceptable" material may be acceptable if the material benefits that particular design and a convincing argument is made.

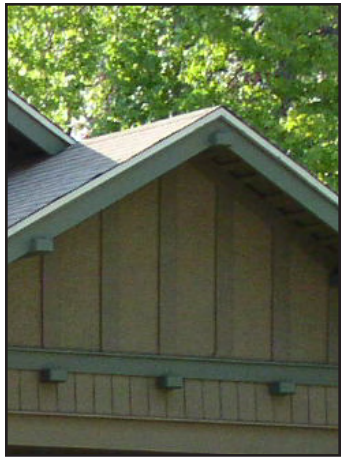
Exterior Wall Finishes – Encouraged with Traditional Styles
Stucco, with appropriate texture (e.g. sand or smooth finish and half-timbering)
Wood clapboard siding
Wood shingles
Wood board and batten
Brick

Exterior Wall Finishes – Encouraged with Modern Aesthetic
Stucco
Metal
Concrete and concrete block
Wood
Glass


Stucco with smooth sand finish.


Wood clapboard siding


Wood shingles


Board and batten


Composition shingles


Clay tile

Wood shakes

Roofing Materials – Encouraged with Traditional Styles
Composition shingles
Clay tile
Slate
Wood Shake (where allowed by code)

Roofing Materials – Encouraged with Modern Aesthetic
Membrane roofing (rolled roofing)
Corrugated or galvanized metal
Composition Shingles

- Quality: Exterior materials should be similar in quality to those typically found in the neighborhood. The texture and sheen of the materials should be similar. Natural materials without an applied finish, or simply painted or stained are preferable. Synthetic materials simulating wood or masonry are discouraged. Any synthetic roofing material should be compatible with the structure and the neighborhood, with colors that simulate natural materials consistent with the style of the house.

- Quantity: The number of different materials used on the exterior of a house should be consistent with the neighborhood and the architectural style of the house. An abundance of different materials should be avoided. The use of one main material and a strong accent material is encouraged.

- Ornamentation: Ornamentation and decorative elements should be applied in a manner consistent with the style of the house. Avoid a lack of ornamentation that could make the residence too plain, or too much ornamentation that will appear overdone.

Facade Treatments

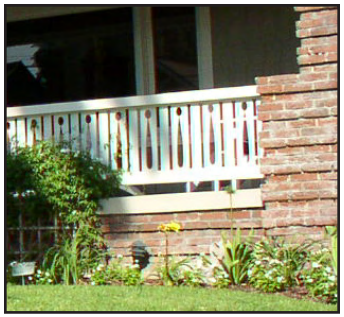
Architectural design quality is enhanced by exterior elements that provide visual interest and detail. The majority of traditional homes in South Pasadena have high quality design features, consistent with the architectural styles of the buildings. New buildings should be consistent with this level of quality and include detailed design features.

- Front entries should be defined with a recessed or projecting covered front entry porch consistent with the style of the building.
- Porches should have a generous depth and width, creating a transitional entry area whenever possible.
- Facade treatments, such as decorative molding or trim, window details such as lintels and shutters, chimneys, balconies and railings should be used on new construction to provide detail.
- Articulated facades with solids and voids, fenestration and recessed and protruding elements and planes, are preferred.
- Large blank walls, particularly two-story flat surfaces should be avoided.








Streetscape and Landscape

Common elements of the streetscape are sidewalks with greenbelts and mature landscaping.

Placement of new residential buildings in established neighborhoods should take advantage of existing curb cuts.

Streetscape and Landscape

New construction should relate to the existing streetscape and incorporate landscape elements similar to the surrounding neighborhood. Streetscape includes elements related to the roadway such as street trees, planting strips, and detached sidewalks. Streetscape elements should all be retained where they are consistent throughout a neighborhood and added with new development or infill where they are missing.

Landscape

- Landscaping of individual lots and residences should be consistent with the surrounding neighborhood. Most front yards have a generous area of lawn, many with landscaped garden areas and mature trees.
- Landscape materials and features should be compatible with the architectural style of the house and complementary in massing color, texture, form and scale.
- Encourage water-wise landscaping.

Driveways

- Driveways should be consistent with the width and placement of other driveways on the block.
- Most driveways in South Pasadena are along the side yard, often leading to a separate garage at the rear yard. New driveways should be consistent with this pattern where it exists.
- Paving material for driveways and walkways should be consistent with the architectural style and materials of the house. Concrete with a pattern, texture and color is encouraged.

- Reduction in driveway paving width with the use of decorative paving or a planted median is encouraged.

Walkways

- In most South Pasadena neighborhoods walkways, perpendicular to the street, lead from the sidewalk to the building entry at the center of the front yard.

- This pattern of simple, straight walkways, centered on the lot should be continued with new construction where it exists nearby.

- Curved or angular walkways should be avoided. Walkway materials should be simple and consistent with the typically narrow concrete walkways found at existing.

Fences, Walls and Gates

- Front yards should remain open to public view and remain free of fencing or hedges.

- Historic retaining walls, curbs and stairs should be preserved; these elements should be retained and incorporated with new construction and landscaping.

- Large areas of paving, decks or patios are discouraged at the front yards.

The established street pattern includes perpendicular walkways.

Retaining walls of varying materials are also found in South Pasadena.